

# China in Age of Imperialism

## Qing Dynasty

Emphasize Manchu Superiority

- Racial Purity
- Reserve Manchu homeland for Manchurians only
- No intermarriage
- All Chinese men must wear the Manchurian hair style: "que"



## British East India Company: Tea and Opium

### British East India Company

- Monopoly trading rights to India – Colonial rule
- Extended to China
- Chinese Merchant Guild
  - **Hong** Merchant houses
  - Only 8 licensed to trade with foreigners

## British East India Company: Tea and Opium

### Tea trade

- Tea demand in England explodes
- China also in high demand—hence the name “China”
- Trade with China is imbalanced
- Tea trade is net drain in Silver
- Opium from Afghanistan (then part of British India) sold to China to prevent the outflow of silver from Britain

## **British East India Company: Tea and Opium**

New opium supply is plentiful and cheap  
China suffers a drug problem

Creates a special post to deal with drug  
problem

## **Opium War**

Chinese appeal to Britain  
Request the Queen stop the opium trade

British government does not reply

China searches British ships  
Throw opium cargo into the ocean

# Opium War

British declare war:

- First **Opium War** 1839 – 1842
- British Win
- Treaty of Nanking (Nanjing) 1842
  - First Unequal treaty

# Treaty of Nanking

Unequal Treaty

- *Extraterritoriality*
  - British get special legal status
  - Only answer to British Law, even when in China
- Open Ports
- Open Trade
- Tariffs controlled by treaty, not by China
- War reparations--The Qing government had to pay the British government six million silver dollars for the opium that had been confiscated by Lin Zexu in 1839, 3 million dollars in compensation for debts that the Hong merchants in Canton owed British merchants, and a further 12 million dollars in compensation for the cost of the war.



## Treaty of Nanking

Unequal Treaty

British Citizens free to travel

Free to preach too

Protestant Christianity Enters China

## Protestants in China

Gunboat mission work

- Missions enter through treaty
- Perceived as connected to British military might
- Forced on China
- Would such a mission appeal to you?

## Protestants in China

Protestant and Catholic Missions increase dramatically

Contributions:

- Schools for commoners and girls
- Translate major works, starting with the Bible into vernacular Chinese
  - Starts a whole new accessible literature
- Introduce Western science and technology
- Introduce Western concept of democratic governance

## Qing Stagnation

Qing Dynasty in the 1800s: At the end of dynastic decline

- Factionalism
- Corruption
- Stagnation
- Disorder
- Still saw all foreigners as 'barbarians'

## Qing Stagnation

- Middle Kingdom syndrome: they didn't need to change
- Could not conceive of any real threat
- Landed Gentry held all the real power
  - Gentry are ALWAYS conservative, resist change
- Militarily and economically behind

## Taiping Rebellion 1850-1864

- Taiping Rebellion. 1850-64. Widespread civil war in China led by Christian convert Hong Xiuquan.. About 25 million people died, mainly civilians, in one of the deadliest military conflicts in history.
- Hong Xiuchuan: Charismatic Leader
  - “Younger Brother of Jesus”
  - Communal living
  - Chastity
  - Gender Equality

## **Taiping Rebellion: 1850-1864**

- Massive movement
- Anti foreign – anti Manchu
- Qing unable to repress
- Qing call on British for help
  - British put it down
  - Demand reparations

## **1860s: Retrench or Reform?**

Some reform efforts as people recognize:

- Need to modernize
- Need to improve technology
- Need to reform and revitalize government

Resisted by entrenched interests:

- Imperial Court
- Confucian Officials
- Gentry – powerful families/clans



## Empress Dowager: Cixi – rules 1861-1898

Royal concubine whose son  
becomes emperor at age  
5 (first wife had no sons)

Rules as regent over her  
son

Staunchly conservative,  
traditional and backward  
looking dictator



## Cixi: The Empress Dowager

Child Emperor follows path of debauchery

- Alcohol and drugs
- Prostitutes – both female and male
- Debilitated by dependency
- Died at 19 of combination of small pox and VD

Cixi generally believed to have encouraged  
debauchery to keep him from challenging  
her power

## Cixi: The Empress Dowager

Empress characterized as:

- Dictatorial
- Vicious
- Reactionary

Names 4-year old nephew as new emperor

- Continues as regent
- Both co-regents die ...?



## Cixi: The Empress Dowager

Drained Navy's renovation funds to build new summer palace complete with a marble boat



## Cixi: The Empress Dowager

Retires to Summer Palace in 1889

Emperor (nephew) adopts some reforms

- Rail roads, telegraphs, etc.
- 100 Days Reform in 1898
  - Government and Economic reforms begin
  - Cixi returns from retirement
  - Imprisons emperor on an island in a lake inside the forbidden city
  - Halts reforms
  - Purges and has reformers slaughtered

## Cixi: The Empress Dowager

1898:

Cixi, from her deathbed, orders emperor (nephew) poisoned

He dies and she follows within a day

China left with another 4-year-old emperor

Movie recommendation:  
***The Last Emperor*** (1987)  
tells the story of this  
little boy emperor's life.



## Back to 1800s

### 1894-1895: Sino-Japanese War

Trouble in Korea involves China and Japan in war

Japan wins easily

Japan demands reparations

Unequal Treaty

## Boxer Rebellion 1898

Millenarian Movement:  
Restore China to the Chinese

- Martial Arts  
(Shadow Boxing) could make them powerful and invulnerable to bullets even.
- Deeply anti-foreign.
- Telegraphs, steam engines, etc. were offending local gods and *feng shui*
- Killed Missionaries and Chinese Christians
- Anti Manchu



A BOXER RECRUIT AT DRILL.  
(Reduced facsimile from a drawing by Mr. A. H. Savage  
Landor in *China and the Africa*. By permission.)  
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## **Boxer Rebellion 1898**

Foreign Powers enter to stop Boxers

- Tremendous violence
- Vengeance on Chinese, not just Boxers
- Reparations demanded
- Britain demands Hong Kong
  - 99 year lease

## **Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905**

Japan defeats Russia

Leaves Northern China under Japanese influence

Expands Japan's power

Japanese imperialism expands at China's expense, especially in Manchuria

## Sun Yat-sen: Chinese Modernization & Nationalism

Qing Dynasty largely disintegrates after boxer Rebellion and Russo-Japanese war.

Chinese in exile plan China's revival:  
Especially:  
Sun Yat-sen in France

## Sun Yat-sen

Chinese Nationalist  
Studies Marxism in France



3 People's Principles

- **People's Nationalism**

- **People's Democracy**

- 3 branches like US with Checks and Balances
- Censorate (undercover investigator)
- Examination system

- **People's Livelihood**

- Land Reform
- Emphasize collective nature of an economy
- Not really either capitalist or Socialist; vague

# Qing Collapse: 1911

Qing Dynasty ends officially in 1911  
Young emperor survives

No single leader or government  
Warlord factionalism

1920s Communists and Nationalists emerge to contest leadership

Both claim Sun Yat-sen as the father of their movement.

Sun survives until 1925 but never really rules china